North Island snipe

The **North Island snipe** (*Coenocorypha barrierensis*), also known as the **little barrier snipe** or **tutukiwi**, is an extinct species of bird in the sandpiper family, Scolopacidae, that was endemic to New Zealand.

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North Island snipe
Conservation status
Extinct (IUCN 3.1)[1]
Scientific classification
Kingdom: Animalia
Phylum: Chordata
Class: Aves
Order: Charadriiformes
Family: Scolopacidae
Genus: *Coenocorypha*
Species: ***C. barrierensis***
Binomial name
Coenocorypha barrierensis Oliver, 1955[2]
Synonyms
▪ *Coenocorypha aucklandica barrierensis*

Taxonomy and etymology

Examination of the taxonomy of *Coenocorypha* snipe has been hindered by lack of material, erroneous locality data, misidentified specimens and confused nomenclature.[3] The North Island snipe was described in 1955 by Walter Oliver as a subspecies of the Subantarctic snipe (*Coenocorypha aucklandica*), but has since been elevated to a full species, with fossil material from the North Island referred to it.[4][5] The specific epithet and older common name refer to the type locality.

Distribution and extinction

The North Island snipe is extinct. Its prehistoric distribution comprised the North Island where subfossil remains have been found in several places. It became extinct on the mainland of North Island following the occupation of New Zealand by Polynesians (the ancestors of the Māori people) and the associated introduction of Pacific rats (*Rattus exulans*). It survived on at least one small island, Little Barrier Island in the Hauraki Gulf, until 1870 where the type (and only existing) specimen was taken.[3][5][6] According to Oliver, "About 1870 two snipe were seen on Little Barrier Island by Captain Bennett of the schooner *Mary Ann*. One was captured alive but died in captivity, the other escaped. The captured specimen was presented to the Auckland Museum by Mr T.B. Hill and is the basis of the following account."[2]

Description

Oliver described the North Island snipe as being generally similar to other *Coenocorypha* snipes. He added that it differed from the South Island snipe in the "greater area of buffy white on chin and throat, the absence of bars on the lower abdomen, the crescent-shaped markings on the upper abdomen and the less rufous general coloration".[2]

References

Notes

1. Birdlife International (2014). "*Coenocorypha barrierensis*" (https://www.iucnredlist.org/details/62178398/0). *IUCN Red List of Threatened Species*. **2014**. Retrieved 7 January 2015.
2. Oliver (1955).
3. Higgins & Davies (1996).
4. Worthy *et al.* (2002).
5. Baker *et al*. (2009).
6. Miskelly (1987).

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